1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

bours tumultuous waves come and go sporadically, while about the mile-wide boca the choppy sea sometimes takes the form of spire-like jets, spurting 5 or 10 feet high and breaking into aigrettes of glittering spray in most unwaterlike and wholly indescribable fashion. Dewey described the strait as "unsafe for navigation by any except the smallest class of vessels"; it is safe, indeed, only for portable and indestructible craft like the Seri balsas, which may be put off or carried ashore at will by craftsmen willing to wait for wind and tide, and unpossessed of impediments of a sort to be injured by wetting. Of such an environment the balsa is a natural product.

The adjunct islets of Seriland are miniatures of Tiburon in all essential respects, save that they are without fresh water. The largest is San Esteban, a somewhat complex butte rising sharply from the waters in a nearly continuous sea-cliff recording vigorous work by storms and tides; it is occasionally visited by the Seri, chiefly in search of water-fowl and eggs. The most important of the series in Seri economy and mythology is Isla Tasne, off the mouth of Bahia Kino; it is a rugged butte some 600 feet high, rising in wave-cut cliffs on the sea side and pedimented by low spits and banks of sand toward the lea; the sand-banks are literally flocked with pelicans, while other fowl cover the flatter ledges and crowd the crannies of the pinnacle. Isla Turner is a somewhat smaller and still more rugged butte, bounded on both sides by precipitous cliffs, while Roca Foca is merely a great rock shelving upward from the storm-swept waters off the most exposed angle of Tiburon; in the crannies of the former birds nest abundantly, while the lower ledges of both are haunted by seals. Isla Patos, north of Tiburon, is a breeding-place for different water-fowl, and is especially noted as a refuge for ducks; it, too, is for the most part a rocky butte, with a sandy shelf at the eastern base. Beyond San Esteban lies the similar but smaller Isla San Lorenzo, while Isla Salsipuedes and a few other islets stretch thence northward half way to the southern point of Isla Angel de la Guarda, the second-largest island of the gulf. San Lorenzo and the smaller islets are occasionally visited by the Seri, partly for a mineral pigment used in face-painting, partly in quest of game; and they sometimes push on to the larger island to enjoy its fairly abundant game, including the easily taken iguana, amid the ruins of an ancient culture apparently akin to that of southern Mexico. Even the most frequented islets, Tasne and Patos, can be reached only by crossing miles of open sea; but in their way the Seri are as canny navigators as they are skilful boat-builders—it is their habit to hug the shore in threatening weather, to await wind and tide for hours or days together, to set out on distant journeys only when all conditions favor, and in emergency to seize inspiration from the storm like the vikings of old, and bend supernormal power to the control of their craft.

Summarily, the prevailing features of Seriland may be said to be

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

vivacity awakened in the Seri bystanders by their spokesman's frequent interlocutions with them during the recital. Unfortunately the account was not clear as to the seasons selected, though the expressions indicated that the feasts are fixed for times at which the young are fully fledged. It would seem inconceivable that the Seri, with their insatiate appetite for eggs and tender young, should consciously respect a breeding time or establish a closed season to perpetuate any game; yet it is probable that the pelican is somehow protected in such wise that it is not only not exterminated or exiled, but actually fostered and cultivated. It is certain that the mythical Ancient of Pelicans is the chief creative deity of Seri legend, and its living representative the chief tutelary of one of the clans; it is certain, too, that this fleshly fowl, sluggish and defenseless as it is on its sleeping grounds, would be the easiest source of Seri food if it were hunted indiscriminately; and it is no less certain that the omnivorous tribesmen would quickly extinguish the local stock if they were to make its kind, including eggs and young, their chief diet; yet it survives in literal thousands to patrol the waters of all Seriland in far-stretching files and vees seldom out of sight in suitable weather. On the whole, it would seem evident that an interadjustment has grown up between the tribesmen and their fish-eating tutelary during the centuries, whereby the fowl is protected, albeit subconsciously only, during the breeding seasons; and in view of other characteristics of the tribe it would seem equally evident that the protection is in some way effected by means of ceremonies and tabus. 223 [776]

Somewhat analogous, though apparently less ceremonial, expeditions are made to Isla Patos and other points in search of ducks, and to Isla San Esteban, and still more distant islands in search of eggs (preferably near the hatching point) and nestlings; while the abundant waterfowl of the region are sought in Rada Ballena and other sheltered bays, as well as in such landlocked lagoons as those of Punta Miguel and Punta Arena. This hunting involves the use of bows and arrows, though the archery of the tribe pertains rather to the chase of larger land game, and apparently attains its highest development in connection with warfare. No specialized fowling devices have been observed among the Seri; and their autonomous recitals, the facies of their artifacts, and the observed habits of the tribe (especially the youth) with respect to birds, all indicate that ordinary fowling holds a subordinate place in Seri craft—i. e., that it is a fortuitous and emergency avocation, rather than an organized art like turtle-fishing and water-carrying. Concordantly, culinary processes are not normally employed in connection with waterfowl, and the customary implements used for incising the skin and severing other tissues are the shell-cup, which is carried habitually for other purposes, the cane-splint, which appears to be improvised on occasion and never carried habitually, and the ubiquitous hupf. [772] [411] [412]

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

one of the hunts. The condition of the remains and the various indications connected with the rancheria corroborated the tradition that the great creature had afforded unlimited and acceptable food for many moons; and various expressions of the tradition indicated that the event, though the most memorable of its class, was not unique in Seri lore.

A few bones and fragments of skin of the seal were found in and about the rancherias on Isla Tiburon, and an old basket rebottomed with sealskin was picked up in a recently abandoned jacal on Rada Ballena; a few bones provisionally identified with the porpoise (which haunts Boco Infierno in shoals) were also found amid the refuse about the old rancheria at the base of the long sand-spit terminating in Punta Tormenta; but nothing was learned specifically concerning the chase and consumption either of these animals or of the abundant sharks from which the island is named.

Among the exceedingly limited food supplies brought from the coast by the Seri group at Costa Rica in 1894, were rank remnants of partly desiccated fish, usually gnawed down to heads and tails; and Mashém and others spoke of fish as a habitual food, while Señor Encinas regarded it as the principal element of the tribal dietary. The harder bones and heavier scales of several varieties of fish were also found abundantly among the middens of both mainland and Tiburon shores in 1895. None of the remains bore noticeable traces of fire; and all observations, including those of Señor Encinas, indicate that the smaller varieties of fish are habitually eaten raw, either fresh or partially dried, according to the state of appetite at the time of taking—or the condition of finding when picked up as beach flotsam. But a single piscatorial device was observed, i. e., the barbed point and foreshaft, shown in figure 21—the iron point being, of course, acultural, and probably obtained surreptitiously. This harpoon, which measures 6 inches in length over all, is designed for use in connection with the main shaft of a turtle-catching tackle; and it is evidently intended for the larger varieties, perhaps porpoises or sharks. In 1827 Hardy observed a related device:

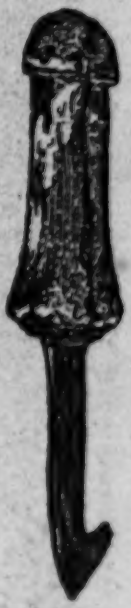

FIG. 21—Fish-spearhead.

> They have a curious weapon which they employ for catching fish. It is a spear with a double point, forming an angle of about 90°. The insides of these two points, which are 6 inches long, are jagged, so that when the body of a fish is forced between them, it can not get away on account of the teeth.[1]

Don Andrés Noriega, of Costa Rica, described repeatedly and circumstantially a method of obtaining fish by aid of pelicans, in which a

[1] Travels, p. 330.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

young or crippled fowl was roped to a shrub or stone, to be fed by his fellows; when at intervals a youth stole out to rob the captive's pouch. At first blush this device would seem to rise above the normal industrial plane of the Seri and to lie within the lower stages of zoöculture, like the cormorant fishing of China if not the hawking of medieval Europe; yet on the whole it may be deemed fairly consistent with that cruel yet mutually beneficial toleration between tribesmen and pelicans attested by the preservation of the avian communal, as already noted. Moreover, Don Andrés observations are in accord with early notes of the exceedingly primitive aborigines of California, from whom the Seri have undoubtedly borrowed various cultural suggestions; thus Venegas quotes Padre Torquemada as saying:

> I accidentally found a gull tied with a string and one of his wings broke. Around this maimed bird lay heaps of excellent pilchards, brought thither by its companions; and this, I found, was a stratagem practiced by the Indians to procure themselves a dish of fish; for they lie concealed while the gulls bring these charitable supplies, and when they think that little more is to be expected they seize upon the contributions.

The padre says also of these gulls that "they have a vast craw, which in some hangs down like the leather bottles used in Peru for carrying water, and in it they put their captures to carry them to their young ones"—from which it is evident that he refers to the pelican. Venegas adds, "Such are the mysterious ways of Providence for the support of his creatures!"[1] And in the margin of his accompanying "Mapa de la California", he introduces a vigorous picture of a captive fowl, its free fellow, and the mess of fish, the cut being headed "Alcatraxes" (pelicans).

Despite these devices, the dearth of fishing-tackle among the Seri is evidently extreme. Save in the single specimen figured, no piscatorial apparatus of any sort was found among the squalid but protean possessions at the Costa Rica rancheria; neither nets nor hooks nor rods nor lines nor any other device suitable for taking the finny game were found in the scores of jacales containing other artifacts on Tiburon; while Señor Encinas was conversant only with the simple method of taking fish by hand from the pools and shallows left by receding breakers or ebbing tides. This dearth of devices is significantly harmonious with other Seri characteristics: it accords with the leading place assigned the turtle in their industry and their lore; it is in harmony with that primitive and nonmechanical instinct which leads them to rely on bodily strength and skill and swiftness rather than on extracorporeal artifacts in their crude and incomplete conquest of nature; and it is a manifest expression of relation with their distinctive physical environment—for the ever-thundering breakers of their gale-swept coast are abundant, albeit capricious, bringers of living grist, while the offshore gales at low tide lay bare hundreds of acres of shoaler

[1] History of California, 1759, vol. i, p. 61.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

177 224 knives in severing the tough integuments and tendons of horses and kine, although the tendency has not yet resulted (as elsewhere noted, ante, pp. 153–154) in the development of a knife-sense; and although boys on the frontier play at roping dogs, no effort to use the riata or any form of rope is made in the actual chase. As naively explained by Mashém amid approving grunts from his clan-mates, they have no time for ropes or knives when hungry.

262 A quantitatively unimportant yet by no means negligible fraction of the normal diet of Seriland is vegetal; and while the sources of vegetal food are many and diverse, the chief constituent is a single product characteristic of American deserts, viz, the tuna, or prickly pear.

222 All of the cacti of the region yield tunas in considerable quantity. The pitahaya is perhaps the most abundant producer, and its name is often given to the fruit; the huge saguaro affords an enormous annual yield, and the still more gigantic saguesa is even more prolific, especially in its immense forests along the eastern base of Sierra Seri; the cina adds materially to the aggregate product, while the nopal, or common prickly pear, contributes a quota acquiring importance from the facility with which it may be harvested. The fruits of all these cacti are sometimes classed as sweet tunas, in contradistinction from the sour tunas yielded in great abundance by the choila and consumed with avidity by stock, though seldom eaten by men. The edible tunas average about the size of lemons, and resemble figs save that their skin is beset with prickles. The portion eaten is a luscious pulp, filled with minute seeds like those of the fig save that they are too hard for mastication or digestion, its flavor ranging from the sickly sweet of the overcultivated fig to a pleasant acidity. While occasional tunas may be found at any time during the year, the normal harvest occurs about midsummer, or shortly before the July-August humid season, and lasts for several weeks. During the height of the season the clans withdraw from the coast and give undivided attention to the collection and consumption of the fruits, gorging them in such quantities that, according to the testimony of the vaqueros, they are fattened beyond recognition. Commonly the tunas are eaten just as they are gathered, and the families and larger bands move about from pitahaya to pitahaya and from valley to valley in a slovenly chase of this natural harvest, until waning supply and cloying appetite drive them back to the severer chase of turtle and pelican. The fruit is not cooked, and never preserved save in the noisome way of nature, and is rarely transported in quantities or over distances of industrial importance; yet the product may have some connection with the basketry of the tribe. The devices for collecting the fruits, especially from the lofty saguaro and saguesa, are mere impersonations of harpoon shafts, palobianco branches, or chance cane-stalks carried primarily for arrow-making or bulas construction.

[413]

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

There is no such well-studied and semiceremonial apparatus for fruit-gathering as, for example, the Papago device made from the ribs of the dead saguaro in accordance with traditional formula. 222 [412]

Perhaps second in importance among the vegetal constituents of Seri diet is the mesquite bean, which is gathered in random fashion whenever a well-loaded tree is found and other conditions favor. The woody beans and still woodier pods are roughly pulverized by pounding with the hupf on any convenient stone used as an abat (metate or mortar), or, if suitable stones are not at hand, they are carried in baskets or improvised bags to the nearest shore or other place at which stones may be found. The half-ground grist is winnowed in the ordinary way of tossing in a basket; and the grinding and winnowing continue alternately until a fairly uniform bean meal is obtained. So far as was actually observed this is eaten raw, either dry in small pinches or, more commonly, stirred in water to form a thin atole; but expressions at Costa Rica indicated that the meal is sometimes stirred in boiling water or pot-liquor, and thus partially cooked, in times of rest and plenty. [262] 252

Other vegetal products used as food comprise a variety of seeds collected from sedges and grasses growing about the mud-flats of Laguna La Cruz and other portions of the province, as well as the seeds and nuts of the scant shrubbery of shores and mountains; while a local seaweed or kelp is eaten in small quantity, apparently as a condiment, and is sometimes carried on journeys even as far as Costa Rica, where specimens were obtained in 1894. 262

It is of interest to note that one of the most distinctive constituents of the Sonoran flora, and one intimately connected with human life in the great neighboring province of Papagueria, is of negligible rarity in Seriland; this is the visnaga (*Echinocactus*, probably of two or three species), the thorniest of the cacti and the only one containing consumable pulp and sap. This peculiar plant is of no small interest in itself as a striking example of the inverse relation between protective devices of chemical sort (culminating in acrid, offensive, or toxic juices) and the mechanical armaments so characteristic of desert plants;[1] it is of still deeper interest economically as the sole source of water over broad expanses of the desert, and one to which hundreds of pioneers and travelers have been indebted for their lives; and it is of interest, too, as a factor of Papago faith, in which the visnaga ranks among the richer guerdons of the rain gods. Throughout most of Papagueria this cactus is fairly abundant; usually there are several specimens to the square mile of suitable soil (it is not found in playas or on the ruggeder sierras), so that it is always within reach of the sagacious traveler; but it diminishes in abundance toward the borders of Seriland, and not more than a dozen examples were found in the portions of that province traversed by the 1895 expedition. Its rare occurrence, 137

[1] Cf. The Beginning of Agriculture, The American Anthropologist, vol. VIII, Oct., 1895, pp. 350-376.

283 from coarse, wiry grass stems, and saved all
302 the brushings to be used in the making of strong threads and cords.

The fleetness of foot and remarkable physi-
147 cal endurance of these people attest to the
481 rigorous and difficult life in Seriland where the ability of an individual to survive a season of want depended upon the reserve energy of his own body by which he could carry himself long distances in search of food and yet have strength to return to a waterhole, left miles behind. The slender, sinewy limbs and capacious chests of the Seris, in whom no trace of obesity has ever been observed, show clearly the result of untold centuries of selection of the strong by the severity of the environment, where water,
[312] too heavy for transport, too difficult of storage, is yet always within reach of an organism strong enough to journey ten, twenty, or even fifty miles in search of it.

Perhaps the most severe physical exercise
224 practiced by the Seris was the chase of animal game, particularly since it was often resorted to only after a period of weakening hunger which prompted the all-out effort to obtain adequate food supply. Days of wandering over the deserts in search of vegetable food were sometimes unrewarded, and although rabbits were to be had for the chase, they were too small to be of much consequence in the feeding of a family. The deer were fairly plentiful and provided excellently for a lasting feast.

The deer hunt was conducted by several tribesmen without weapons. When an animal was sighted it was followed by one and circled by others of the party, chased until frantic and exhausted, whereupon one of the men rushed upon it, threw it to the ground and caved in its skull with a stone.

The most avidly sought prey in the Seri chase were the helpless young and heavily pregnant does which were pursued and rent to fragments with a horrible fury, particularly with intent upon the succulent tidbits afforded by the fetal flesh.

● 222 A time of ease and plenty came each summer, for usually in late May or June the cactus plants with which Seriland abounds begin to mature their fruits. In the foothills of Sierra Seri on the mainland, great

3:Davis & Dawson F-5 (1922-1940) 1945
NU31 Seri NU31

222 forests of giant cacti (Fig. 9) provide during this season an unlimited supply of "pitahayas" toward which the tribespeople customarily moved to accomplish the annual harvest. The fruits were readily knocked down by means of long poles and, when ripe, the spines were easily brushed off, leaving a luscious pulp as big as a fig. During the height of the season all the clans withdrew from the coast and gave their undivided attention to the collection and consumption of the cactus fruit, gorging tremendous quantities for weeks until waning supply and cloying appetite drove them back to the more severe hunt for turtle and pelican.

252 262 514 Perhaps the only germ of thriftiness in the Seris is shown by a peculiar custom with respect to the pitahayas. The fruits, eaten in such enormous quantity, were imperfectly digested, the hard-coated seeds particularly passing through the body unchanged. Using [415] [251] large seashells, the feces containing these seeds were collected and preserved with some care. Thus, when the harvest of fresh fruits was over, there remained a hoard of these dry, nutritious discharges which were ground on the stone abet, winnowed in a shallow basket and made into a meal to be eaten, either dry, as a watery atole, or mixed with turtle grease to form a thick paste.

614 Although the Seri's omnipresent problems of food-getting and of personal subsistence have been of particular interest, the lost social customs of the tribe deserve a moment's attention. Before the death of all [161] but a few of the 2,000–3,000 Seris at the hands of invading Spaniard and Mexican, the tribe consisted of a number of conspicuous maternal clans, each of which was presided over by a zoic tutelary such as the Pelican, the Turtle, the Rattlesnake, or the Badger. The totemic symbols denoting the 302 various beast-gods and incidentally indicating the blood-carriers of clans dedicated to 386 them, consisted of elaborate designs painted 614 upon the face (Fig. 10). In accord with their savagery in which the social organization was based on blood kinship reckoned in the female line, under ordinary circumstances, the faces only of the females were painted. Colored minerals pounded to powder afforded the pigments for the paint-

[p. 201(A)]

ingenuity of a modern shipbuilder to have constructed a boat. These simple, desert people, however, through centuries of struggle for life in their desolate realm had learned to use every natural material available to them, however laborious the tasks and inefficient the products. The carrizal reed, *Phragmites communis*, grows about the few permanent water holes of Seriland, and from countless numbers of these slender, buoyant canes they built their watercraft. The reeds were stripped of leaves and gathered in long bundles, bound together and gradually augmented by more and more interlaced canes until a bundle 18 to 30 feet long and 1½ feet in diameter, tapering at both ends, was made. Three of these were then bound together with cords of fiber or human hair, making a maneuverable one or two man raft, easily transported to the shores.

The mesquite tree, *Prosopis juliflora*, provided fiber for cords. The flexible outer tissues of the roots were stripped off, soaked and progressively pounded, split and worked between hand and mouth until very slender, fibrous threads were obtained which were then twisted into cords. In some cases a coarse, rough fabric was woven from these fibers, but most garments were made of pelican skins. The strips of workable mesquite root or sometimes yucca fiber were also used in making doughnut-shaped head pads which aided in balancing the capacitous earthen water jars as they were carried on the heads of the women over rough and stony trails from water hole to camp site.

While occupying the turtle fishing camps on El Infiernillo during the good season, vegetable supplements to the fishy diet were few. Every nourishing seed or woody fruit yielded by the desert was carefully gathered; even the tiny seeds of the sea grass, *Ruppia*, were sorted from beach drift and made into meal. Never did the Seris learn to cultivate any crop or domesticate any animals other than the half wild coyote dogs that lived in mutual toleration with them. Even had they done so, their success in the barren, waterless land would have been small.

Sterile as is the Seri's hinterland, for a time each summer the thorny plants with which it is so profusely stocked ripen an abundant crop of fruit. The cacti in particular yield a wonderful harvest of luscious and succulent fruits, and toward this fortuitous supply the Seris were accustomed to move in June and July. The foothills of Sierra Seri on the mainland are adorned with great numbers of giant cacti, *Pachycereus Pringlei*, *Carnegiea gigantea* and *Lemaireocereus Thurberi* from which the luscious pitahayas were readily knocked down when ripe. The Indians wandered into the cactus forest and after a simple ritual marking the beginning of the feast, proceeded to gorge themselves for weeks on the succulent fruit until waning supply and cloying appetite drove them back to more severe food-getting activity by the sea. They did not customarily find it necessary to leave the cactus forest, however, as soon as the supply of fruits was no longer sufficient, for by the time the fruiting season was ended they had provided themselves with a second harvest. The pitahayas, gorged in such tremendous quantity throughout the season, were very imperfectly digested; the miriads of hard seeds, particularly, passed through the system unchanged and with the preservation of these in mind the Indians carefully collected with the aid of large sea shells all such seedy discharges and let them dry in the desert sun. Thus, as the supply of fresh fruit faded they proceeded to the use of this hoard

X

INSECTS AND ARACHNOIDS

114 Altogether information has been collected concerning 92 species of insects, scorpions, ticks, myriapods and arachnoids.

Economic uses

262 [114] McGee says that "good many insects" are part of the Seri diet, although he does not specify just which they were nor how significant. There is no doubt that in his days, the insects played some role in the Seris' food and that they were probably far more important in the distant past, in the [177] XVIII and early XIX centuries, before large flocks of livestock, horses and cattle of the Spanish rancheros offered excellent opportunities to supplement the usual diet.

Of all this but minor traces remain today. The Seris even have forgotten which insects had been eaten by their ancestors. Apart from the bees, only the Sphingid caterpillar has been indicated as "eaten in the past, but not now." As for the bees, [263] their honey still is part of the Seri diet. But with the availability of sugar, even this addiction dwindles.

* 825 857 Other than this I have been unable to discover any uses whatever, except perhaps as playthings of little boys, with the usual torture in view. The *Cicada* is most significant of these, of which more later.

Pets

231 The only insect pet is a *Cicada*. This insect is usually tied to a long thread, its forewings partly clipped off and then released into the air like a [171] kite. Local Mexicans also provide their own boys with a similar kind of toy.

Hunting

● 222 Only bees are hunted. They are usually flushed out of the cave shelters in the mountains. The operation is accomplished without the use of smoke. The honey is cut out with a knife.

Taxonomy

* 825 Seris' ideas of association of various insects are very loose. Few insects are recognized to form natural groupings; bees, butterflies, wasps, spiders are most distinct. However, there are all sorts of gradations blending confusedly with each other, often dependent on the knowledge and interest of particular informants.

Simple recognition is not always present. Out of 92 forms, 13 the informants could not identify, simply saying that they didn't know them. *Cicindela lemniscata*, *Melanotus cribricollis*, *Horistonotus*, *Meloid*, *Oxacis*, both species of *Cymatodera*, *Photopis*, *Scolopsella*, tiny Scarab, *Leptoremus*, *Homolocorus*, and *Reduviid*—all these were in the

[P. 47 B]

157 The women are virtuous and faithful and perform all the duties of
152 wife and mother and bear their share of hardships. The hard life,
[145] exposure and struggle for existence soon causes hard features, wrinkles
and ugliness. Many babies die young and the tribe probably numbers
[165] only about two hundred.
[167]

The dancing by the driftwood fires continued as we turned in to
123 rest, our eyes constantly drawn to the flame and the glittering eyes in the wild dark faces, while the waves of the sea accompanied the chanting in that mysterious isle of Seriland.

225
133

Seris - off to the fishing grounds - December 1934. Alcatraz Island in distance.

• 222 In Seriland most of the food comes from the sea. During April and May, at the time of my first visit, a green grass growing on the sea bottom was detached and washed ashore. The women dragged it up on the bank near camp and spread it out to dry. Some of the stalks contained about seven fine green seeds the size of a pin head. When dry, the
[285] women threshed them out with sticks on a piece of canvas. These are cleaned by the deft use of the *batea*, or winnowing basket, of which these people are pastmasters.

252 A pint of these fine seeds were parched in an olla over coals of
262 driftwood and constantly stirred to prevent burning. It was then ground on a flat rock like a *metate*---any flat rock---into a green meal which was very nourishing. This was cooked in an olla with turtle oil, making a porridge like thick green paint. It was then drunk or eaten with the fingers. If there is plenty, two fingers are used; if not, only one finger.

262 The Seris also eat the fruit of the *cholla* cactus, *pitahaya* and *sag-*
• 222 *uaro*, and probably many other plants in season, but they are wild to get flour. But the principal diet is cahuama, or sea turtle.

225 After a day or so with the Seris, their food supply became exhaust-
123 ed and they made arrangements to take our boat (all they had was a
[177] *balsa*) and get a sea turtle. So at four o'clock in the morning, with Roberto and Nene, his brother, and myself, they shoved off for the fishing ground. It took two hours of hard rowing to reach the Sonora
[133] side, as the tide was racing up the *Infernillo*. Most of the waters are shallow, with patches of dark and light sandy bottom, with seaweed or grass. On this green grass the turtle feeds; it is their alfalfa field, and it takes a keen-practised eye to see a turtle at the bottom and harpoon him before he escapes.

225 Once on the hunting ground, water, one of the Seris stood in the
[411] bow with a harpoon twenty feet long, a detachable barb on the end of it, and a heavy line attached. The Seri in the bow motioned with his hand this way or that, slow or fast, and watched the bottom. At last he plunged his spear and withdrew the pole. The turtle swam awhile
[411] until exhausted, and then he was drawn alongside, his head pounded with an ironwood club, and then he was turned on his back and drawn on board. This called for great skill in balancing the cranky, smooth-bottomed boat to keep it from shipping a wave.

225 When a Seri goes in his native *balsa*, which only holds one man, he
501 straddles the middle part on his knees, resting them on seaweed. The craft is light and is a good sea craft, but it is low in the water and the man is wet all the time. He uses a double-bladed paddle, and his harpoon rests against pegs set in the *carrisos*. A rock which serves to quiet the turtle, two pointed stakes and a heavy fish line complete the equipment. He has to paddle across to the other side in that cramped position, say eight or ten miles, very early in the morning, then watch his chance to harpoon. If successful he brings up the turtle, knocks him on the head with the rock, pulls him on the end of the craft by skillful manipulation, cut slots in the front flippers, put stakes through and into the *carriso*, pinning him firmly in place, then paddle back.

225 The wind came up strong when we started to return from our turtle
123 hunt and with wind and tide against us we rowed across the Island. Bob and his brother disembarked and took it afoot for camp, a distance of ten miles, reaching there at two p.m. The Seris made a tump line and towed the boat, one towing and two warping off-shore until we arrived at camp about four p.m.

When the bow was run up on the shore everybody came down, the women and children talking a steady stream in their strange jargon.
123 They soon jerked the heavy turtle out, dragged him up the beach on
262 his back, and began immediately to cut him up. Bob spoke for the breast, which is a white plate on the underside of the turtle with

[text continues on p. 168]

642
621 Little information could be elicited about subdivisions 7, 8, 9, and 10. The reason for this might be that Band VI was slow in
[169] abandoning those coastal areas (if it actually did inhabit them)
[688] as it was being displaced by Bands III and IV.

621 The Seri say that long ago several men, called *?ant i?akimhoh* "they who explain the land," came to Tiburon Island and told the
642 people along the eastern shore that they owned also a corre-
173 sponding strip of land on the mainland. Thus the inhabitants of
425 subdivisions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 laid claim to the coastal areas directly
167 across the channel from them as shown by the dotted lines on Fig. 4. They assumed that their new territories extended inland
[222] to include as much terrain as they chose to claim. At first the people went to their mainland areas primarily to gather cactus fruit. Eventually some of them remained on the mainland and established subdivisions 11 and 12. This establishment superseded the claims of the five Tiburon Island subdivisions to their main-
[101] land territories. Although the mainland subdivisions 11 and 12 formed, in some respects, a separate band in their own right, they retained their name, *ta?eowkw kongkaak* "the people of Tiburon Island." Eventually this group returned to Tiburon.

621 Of subdivisions 13 and 14 which are shown on Fig. 4, very
642 little is known. The people of subdivision 13 inhabited an area
131 encompassing the northern end of the dry lake, La Playa Noriega
[829] (San Bartolo). Some of the Seri believe that these people were
[172] giants. Although in this area I have found clay figurines and other
[173] artifacts common to abandoned camps elsewhere, the Seri do not know the names of the camps of this subdivision. Subdivision 14 occupied the area surrounding the southern end of the same dry lake.

Subdivision 15 occupied the general area which is now Villa de Seris, a settlement on the southern edge of Hermosillo. As
[167] Hermosillo grew, it became increasingly difficult for these Seri to maintain their customary way of life, and they eventually returned to Tiburon Island.

642 BAND VI
621 Band VI became divided into four subdivisions, the names of
101 which are:

xnitom	"_____"
pahii	"flint"
kofte oki ifa	"large iguana peninsula"
koiih	"tubular"